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Date 11-21-77

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE: November 21, 1977

PLACE: Casa Rosada, Buenos Aires, Argentina

SUBJECT: Courtesy Call on President Videla

PARTICIPANTS: Argentina: President Rafael Videla
Foreign Minister Oscar A. Montes
Ambassador Jorge Aja Espil

U.S.: Secretary Cyrus Vance
Ambassador Raul Castro
Assistant Secretary Terence Todman

Foreign Minister Montes explained that work would be conducted by having separate commissions meet to discuss economic and political matters and to prepare a joint communique. He would meet with Secretary Vance privately following the Secretary's courtesy calls and would then join the group in a plenary session about noon. 2

President Videla expressed his pleasure in receiving Secretary Vance in Argentina and in the Presidency. He said that he had had a good meeting with President Carter in Washington, but it was far too short. That was why he had invited Secretary Vance to continue the conversation. He was pleased that President Carter had honored his promise to send the Secretary. Argentina would do everything to honor its commitment to make the Secretary's visit as useful as possible. The present call was protocol in nature, but there would be opportunities later for a working lunch and an informal dialogue. He expected much to come from this visit. 4

Secretary Vance said he was very pleased to be here and appreciated the invitation which had made it possible. We also shared a common view that better understanding between our countries is of great importance. He came to Argentina with that as a background and looked forward to

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discussing a number of subjects of importance to both countries. He was very pleased with the progress that had been made in the discussions on nuclear cooperation. The achievements in this area would represent a major step forward of importance not only to the two countries but to the hemisphere and to the rest of the world. He appreciated that now was not the time to get into matters or circumstances, but he looked forward later to discussing a number of subjects, especially human rights, which is an impediment to better relations and which must be resolved in order to define our relationship.

Foreign Minister Montes noted that the Secretary's reference was to the work of the commission which had been working on nuclear matters. He promised to clarify for the Secretary all matters relating to human rights. 5

Secretary Vance said he had brought a list of alleged detainees given to him by a group of organizations in the United States. He could not vouch for the names on the list, but he had been told it included 3,000 that had already been communicated to the Argentine Government. He did note that the list was prepared by responsible and serious organizations. He said he would transmit the list through normal channels and hoped that it would be given early and serious consideration. 6

The Secretary said the United States supported President Sadat's move in the Middle East in traveling to Israel. It carries considerable political and personal risk, but perhaps it is this dramatic kind of move that is needed to break the barrier that has existed. It may be possible that this would provide the impetus for a breakthrough in this very troublesome question. We have been counseling the Arab countries, which oppose the move, to try to exercise restraint and wait to see what the consequences would be. He noted that Sadat was very careful to state in his speech that he was speaking on behalf of all Arabs and not seeking any kind of a private deal with Israel. } for 10

President Videla said he shared the Secretary's opinion concerning the transcendental importance of the visit. He recalled that Argentina had offered to mediate or to help in any way possible to promote peace in the area. He wished to repeat that offer to be of assistance in any way that the United States thought that Argentina might be helpful.

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Montes noted that in addition to nuclear matters and human rights, the conversations would also deal with the balance of trade and military cooperation. He said that he would discuss these matters privately with the Secretary, and if any matter were unresolved that he might wish for Secretary Vance to have a private meeting with President Videla. The President expressed his willingness to cooperate in this regard. He noted that such a private conversation might be especially useful in complicated cases in the human rights areas such as concerning Timerman and the Deutsch family. ⁷ He would be happy to make available to the Secretary their confidential files on these cases.

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